Feb 25 Conference! Early Registration Ends Feb 4

Your CFVGA conference team has a great conference prepared for you.
We want you in Denver Feb 25!
Sessions include:
- Keynote address “Collective Voices: Colorado’s Path to Better Health”, Jandel Allen Davis, MD (Kaiser Permanente)
- Exhibitors/trade show
- Worker Protection Standard Proposed Rule Changes for 2015 – Thia Walker (CSU)
- Overview of CFVGA strategic planning
- Networking at breaks and lunch
- Engagement with produce buyers
- Round table discussions on direct market and organic topics
- Food Safety: Navigating the Rules for Agricultural Water, Hank Giclas (Western Growers)
- Getting the Most Out of Social Media Marketing, Katie Abrams (CSU)
- Annual meeting

Membership drive close to century mark: 92 from 64 last quarter

We are full tilt into our membership drive for 2015. To date we have 34 grower members, 28 industry members, and 30 partner members with over 277 subscribers on our general interest email list.

If you have received this newsletter and are not currently a member, please consider joining a growing number of commercial produce growers, industry members, and partners interested in seeing commercial produce growers of all sizes, production practices and marketing channels in Colorado THRIVE!

To find out more and join online or by mail please go to http://coloradoproduce.org

View our new membership brochure

Top level information:
- Register for annual conference and reserve hotel room by February 4
- See member directory and sponsors!
- Take our survey by February 8, page 4
- Organic Growers, take USDA survey
- Send us your upcoming events and notices

View Jan member directory

Any text that is red is a hyperlink to a website or email. If you have problems opening any, please email info@coloradoproduce.org
President’s Message

Welcome 2015!

I can’t believe that our Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is going to be 1 year old this coming year!

The Board of Directors have been busy and I’m excited about all of the activities that they have planned for the coming year. But we need your help!

First make sure that you have signed up as a member or sponsor and then find out the different ways that you can become involved. Already the CFVGA has formed Food Safety, Labor and Water Committees and they are looking for participants that want to help find solutions that CVFGA can work on.

I truly believe that we can accomplish more together than working alone no matter the challenge so go to ColoradoProduce.org join now and sign up to attend our inaugural annual meeting to be held February 25!

If you have any suggestions or questions I would enjoy hearing from you so email me at rtsakata@aol.com

Additionally, you can submit issues and ideas via this online form.

Sincerely,

Robert Sakata
CFVGA Board President

Colorado Charitable Crop Donation Act

Did you know you can get a tax credit for donations to Colorado’s food banks starting in 2015? HB 14-1119, the “Colorado Charitable Crop Donation Act”, created this new win-win for growers and food banks.

If you file a IRS Schedule F you are eligible. The credit is an amount equal to either 25% (not to exceed $5,000) of the wholesale market price OR 25% (not to exceed $5000) of the most recent sale price of the food contributed. The grower determines the value of the donation. Visit any of these five food banks for details: Care and Share, Community Food Share, Food Bank of the Rockies, Food Bank for Larimer County, and Weld Food Bank.

Feeding Colorado leads this effort.

Sponsorship Campaign Full Speed

CFVGA is proud to have almost a dozen sponsor on board! We welcome those passionate about supporting Colorado fruit and vegetable growers to contribute. Sponsors will be a vital part of CFVGA serving its members.

Sponsors will receive benefits based on their sponsor level and may include:

- Logo on our sponsor page
- Recognition at CFVGA events and in outreach materials
- Free booth and attendance at the annual conference
- Opening remarks at the annual conference

See details at: http://coloradoproduce.org/sponsors/
Current Members Opt-In Listing
Members are given the option for newsletter and website listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grower Members</th>
<th>Industry Members</th>
<th>Partner Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas Valley Organic Growers</td>
<td>Beki Guion</td>
<td>Chip Marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berry Patch Farms</td>
<td>Tim Ferrell</td>
<td>Mike Flesher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cure Organic Farm</td>
<td>Anne Cure</td>
<td>Reid Hanson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ela Family Farms</td>
<td>Steve Ela</td>
<td>Elizabeth Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disanti Farms</td>
<td>Dominic Disanti</td>
<td>Jim Hagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fossil Creek Farms LLC</td>
<td>Steve Maitland</td>
<td>John P Frey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milberger Farms LLC</td>
<td>Shane Milberger</td>
<td>Doug Larson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hill Farm</td>
<td>Katie Slota</td>
<td>Patrick McBride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prima Plant Services</td>
<td>Kim Bock</td>
<td>Kerry Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain Pumpkin Ranch</td>
<td>David Asbury</td>
<td>Darren Klotz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakata Farms</td>
<td>Robert Sakata</td>
<td>Matthew McInerney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Colorado Farms &amp; Nature Fresh Organics</td>
<td>Amy Kunugi</td>
<td>USDA-APHIS-WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talbott's Mountain Gold LLLP</td>
<td>Bruce Talbott</td>
<td>William Alderete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn-key Aquaponics, LLC</td>
<td>James W. Frasche</td>
<td>Lane Requist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more details on these members including websites, contact info, products and services, see our January [Member Directory](#)

Thanks to our sponsors! See more sponsors at [coloradoproduce.org](http://coloradoproduce.org)
CFVGA Board Retreat Provides Enhanced Focus
– Adrian Card, Partner Board Member

The CFVGA Board had its first retreat Nov 7 near Buena Vista, Colorado. Facilitated by John Recca of Brandwerks, the board refined its mission, crafted five pillars of focus, explored partnerships with CDA, CSU and Western Growers, and had a heck of good time getting to know each other better.

After a first round of word-smithing and later Board meeting refinement, here is the mission statement approved by the Board Dec 9:

“CFVGA is the go-to resource for the Colorado fresh fruit and vegetable farmers. We connect Colorado growers with industry, government, academia and consumers to strengthen and expand Colorado fresh fruit and vegetable production.”

In addition to food safety, labor and water, the Board recognizes a fit with nutrition/wellness and business development and details all five pillars as follows:

FOOD SAFETY
CFVGA will provide a “one-stop-shop” for food safety information, resources, policy/procedure recommendations, policy updates, best practices and audit preparation.

LABOR
Growers small, medium and large will benefit from a variety of resources and recommendations concerning HR best practices, compliance and policy updates.

WATER
Critical to fruit and vegetable production in Colorado, water is another key focus of the CFVGA, including water resource management issues advocacy, policy updates, and water efficiency best practices.

NUTRITION & WELLNESS
Fruits and vegetables are among the most nutrient dense foods available, and CFVGA will help consolidate and disseminate information to growers and the public alike, and anticipates nutrition-focused marketing opportunities for Colorado growers in the coming years.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
In addition to providing direct support, resources and value to Colorado producers, the CFVGA will also develop public-facing programs to help promote, market and differentiate Colorado fruits and veggies available to Colorado residents.

These and additional details on the 2015 CFVGA strategic plan will be presented at the annual conference Feb 25.

Give your input to 2015 planning: online survey responses due February 8

CFVGA is conducting an online survey of members and non-members to better understand Colorado fruit and vegetable farm priorities regarding water, labor, food safety and business development. Committees will take input from this survey to determine their 2015 plan of work.

We need your response in this brief online survey by Sunday, February 8.

Here is the direct link if the above link does not work
www.surveymonkey.com/s/CFVGA_Jan_2015

Any text that is red is a hyperlink to a website or email. If you have problems opening any, please email info@coloradoproduce.org
**Colo Water Bills:** Thanks to Garin Vorthmann—Colorado Legislative Services

**HB15-1013 - South Platte Aquifer Study Recommendations**

**Sponsors:** Representatives Coram, Mitsch Bush, Vigil and Senators Sonnenberg, Hodge

This bill directs the CWCB, in consultation with the State Engineer, to administer two pilot projects to evaluate alternative methods of lowering the water table in areas that are experiencing damaging high groundwater levels. One pilot project will be in the Gilcrest/LaSalle area and the other will be in the Sterling area. This was one of the recommendations from the South Platte River Alluvial Aquifer study done by the Colorado Water Institute. HB 1013 also authorizes the State Engineer to review an augmentation plan submitted to a water court if it includes the construction of a recharge structure. The water court may approve the augmentation plan only if the state engineer either approves the operation and design of the proposed recharge structure after determining that the application is not likely to cause injury or proposes changes to the operation and design of the proposed recharge structure as terms and conditions of the application.

**SB15-008 - Promote Water Conservation in Land Use Planning**

**Sponsors:** Senators Roberts, Hodge, Jones and Representatives Vigil, Coram, Mitsch Bush

This bill directs the CWCB to work with DOLA to develop and provide free training programs for local governments regarding best management practices for water demand management and water conservation. The bill directs the CWCB and the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority to include in its consideration on a awarding a grant proposal, whether or not the local government took the training and if they are actively applying the methods in their planning decisions.

**HB15-1038 – Flexible Water Markets**

**Sponsors:** Representative Arndt

This is the third attempt at this concept. Under current law, when an application to change the beneficial use of a water right is filed, the applicant is required to designate a specific alternative beneficial use. HB 1038 creates a more flexible change-in-use system by allowing an applicant who wants to implement a program intended to be an alternative to buy and dry (i.e. fallowing program, regulated deficit irrigation, reduced consumptive use cropping, etc.) to apply for a change in use to any beneficial use, without designating the specific beneficial use. “Flex Use” is defined as an application of the fully consumptive portion of water that has been subject to a water right change (either through water court or through a SWSP approved by the State Engineer). The bill also clarifies that “flex use” is excluded from the anti-speculation doctrine.

**HB15-1118 – Hydroelectric Power**

**Sponsors:** Representative Brown

The bill amends the definition of “renewable energy resources” that can be used to meet the state’s renewable energy standards from other state agencies’ decisions or actions under the “State Administrative Procedure Act,” a party appealing a decision or action of the commission or state engineer may present new evidence on appeal that was never considered by the commission or state engineer. SB 17 limits the evidence that a district court may consider when reviewing a decision or action of the commission or the state engineer on appeal to the evidence the hearing officer allowed to be presented to the commission or the state engineer.

**SB15-055 - Return Of Water From Tail Ditch**

**Sponsors:** Senator Hodge

The bill permits a person to use a tail ditch to return variable amounts of water to a stream. The state engineer shall not require the delivery of a minimum amount of water to the stream, except as required by a court decree.

**SB15-017 - Appellate Process For Decisions About Groundwater**

**Sponsors:** Senator Sonnenberg

The bill states basic tenets of Colorado water law concerning water as a transferable property right, acknowledges that the federal government has maintained deference to state law with respect to water rights, and prohibits the United States Forest Service and the Federal Bureau of Land Management from placing conditions on special use permits for, or rights-of-way on, federal land that:

- Require the owner of a water right or a conditional water right to assign the USFS or the bureau partial or joint ownership of the water right;
- Impose limitations on the alienability of the owner’s water right; or
- Impose restrictions that give the USFS or the bureau full or partial control over the use and operation of the water right.

The bill also prohibits the state and division engineers from cooperating with the USFS or the BLM in enforcing or administering any such conditions on special use permits for, or rights-of-way on, federal land or from expending any public funds related to the enforcement or administration of any such conditions.

Any text that is red is a hyperlink to a website or email. If you have problems opening any, please email info@coloradoproduce.org
Two more water bills and a Farm to School Bill

SB15-075 - Exempt Well Irrigate Up To 1 Acre Commercial Crops

Sponsors: Senator Grantham and Representative Lundeen

Current law exempts certain types of water wells from the prior appropriation system, including the irrigation of not over one acre of home gardens and lawns. The bill adds an exemption for water wells that do not exceed 15 gallons per minute of production and are used for the irrigation of not over one acre of commercial crops.

SB15-084 - Water Right Partial Historical Consumptive Use

Sponsors: Senator Hodge

A water right may be used on one or more parcels of land and may be changed with regard to only some of the parcels. When a water judge decrees a change of a previously unchanged portion of a water right, the bill prohibits the water judge from reducing the actual historical consumptive use of that portion of the water right based on previously decreed changes of use involving another portion of the same water right used on other parcels of land.

HB15-1088 – Concerning the Creation of the Interagency Farm-To-School Grant Program

Sponsor: Representative Winter

This bill would create the interagency farm-to-school grant program established by the department of education and administered by the interagency farm-to-school coordination task force funded from the general fund. Two types of grants would be available. One would be a cost share to farmers, ranchers, or food hubs to be used for investments necessary to meet the food safety associated with sales to schools. The second is a grant to a farmer, rancher, or food hub for costs associated with sales to schools.

Colorado Ag Council Update - Robert Sakata

The Colorado Ag Council held a legislative coffee on January 14 at the Capitol. Senator Sonnenberg has been working hard to get more legislators involved at the regular Ag Council meetings at the Capitol. The first meeting was held in room HCR 109 on Wednesday January 21. Wednesday mornings were typically reserved for the joint Senate/House Ag & Natural Resources Committee hearings but as Chair of the Senate Ag Committee Senator Sonnenberg feels that it would benefit the committee members more by potentially only holding those committee hearings every other week and offer the Ag Council meetings the other week. The Ag Council looks forward to work with more of the Legislators this session.
USDA Provides Greater Protection for Fruit, Vegetable and Other Specialty Crop Growers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that greater protection is now available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for crops that traditionally have been ineligible for federal crop insurance. The new options, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provide greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, and energy crops.

“For years, commodity crop farmers have had the ability to purchase insurance to keep their crops protected, and it only makes sense that fruit and vegetable, and other specialty crop growers, should be able to purchase similar levels of protection. Ensuring these farmers can adequately protect themselves from factors beyond their control is also critical for consumers who enjoy these products and for communities whose economies depend on them,” Vilsack said.

Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Producers can now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price.

To help producers learn more about the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and how it can help them, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage. It also gives them an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

Survey forms were mailed in early January to approximately 17,000 producers nationwide. Responses are due by mail by February 13, 2015 or online by April 3, 2015. To ensure the most complete and accurate accounting of organic agriculture in the United States, the 2014 Organic Survey is a census of all known U.S. certified and exempt organic operations that are currently on NASS’s list frame from the 2011 Certified Organic Survey and the 2012 Census of Agriculture, as well as new certified organic entities obtained from the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

Upcoming Events, Notices and Resources: send us your events

- Southern Rocky Mountain Ag Conference
  Feb 10-12
- CSU Small Farm and Specialty Crops Ag Business Management Resources,
  marketing, value-added, business planning, food systems, on-farm food safety
- National Young Farmers Coalition advocacy and resources for young farmers
- CSU Extension Building Farmers 2015 programs
- CSU Farm to Table grower food safety resources

Any text that is red is a hyperlink to a website or email. If you have problems opening any, please email info@coloradoproduce.org
We want YOU and those in your network as members! All can find a fit as a grower member, industry member or partner member.

Send your friends and colleagues to our website where they can download member information or apply and pay directly online.

Go to:  [www.coloradoproduce.org](http://www.coloradoproduce.org)

Subscribe to our [email list](mailto:admin@coloradoproduce.org)

Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com)

Help with 2015 priorities:
Members and non-members, please complete our online survey of focus areas for 2015 by Sunday, February 8

CFVGA On the Road!
Over the past months Board members have traveled to various parts of Colorado to help promote CFVGA. We’ve had a blast and hope you had a chance to say hello and let us know how you would like for CFVGA to work for you. Here is our short list of events:

- Colorado Farm Bureau Annual Meeting | November 20-23, 2014 (Denver)
- Western Colorado Food and Farm Forum | January 10, 2015 (Montrose)
- Rocky Mtn Agribusiness Association | January 13-15 (Denver)
- Western Colorado Horticulture Society | January 13-15 (Grand Junction)
- Colorado Farm Show | January 27 (Greeley)
- Colorado Onion Assoc | January 29 (Brighton)
- S Rocky Mountain Ag Conference | Feb 10 (Monte Vista)

[Email us](mailto:admin@coloradoproduce.org) if you would like outreach at your event!